

TO: V.J. St. Pierre Jr., PARISH PRESIDENT

FROM: Ronald J. Perry, DIRECTOR  
DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
& EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

SUBJECT: 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

We are pleased to report that the Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness continued to progress in 2014. Priorities established at the beginning of the year emphasized completion of emergency facilities, conducting drills and exercises to maintain and increase proficiencies, maintenance of existing plans and procedures as well as establishment of oversight and response capabilities for our department. Our efforts resulted in the successful completion of activities related to these priorities that I would like to further document here.

The main focus of our efforts in 2014 was the occupancy of the new Emergency Operations Center. This building was completed on time and under budget and greatly enhances the emergency response capability of the Parish. The new EOC was dedicated on November 14, 2013 and fully occupied in February 2014.

The Department of Homeland Security & Emergency Preparedness participated in a number of exercises and drills throughout 2014 with the goal of maintaining a high degree of preparedness and skill based proficiency. The EOC staff participated in a Mutual Aid drill simulating response between Parish agencies and industrial facilities as well as numerous drills with individual industrial facilities; a hurricane table top drill for Parish agencies; a Strategic National Stockpile/Cities Readiness Initiative drill demonstrating the ability to deliver preventive medicine under pandemic conditions; a train derailment tabletop drill for all Parish volunteer fire departments; and Safe School drills in association with other Parish agencies to demonstrate readiness for school related emergency events. In addition, St Charles Parish hosted the waterborne element of the State Disaster Response Exercise in April. All of these activities were completed successfully. It is important to note that our department documented lessons learned from each of these activities that will be used to improve our response capability.

Our department responded to several real world events in 2014 for which activation of the EOC was required. There were 129 Unusual Events classified in 2014, 3 Alerts (Valero/Diamond Green Diesel Explosion; Monsanto ACL fusion and October tornado warning), and 1 Site Area Emergency (January Ice Storm). The January ice storm and the Valero/Diamond Green Diesel Explosion both required activation of the Emergency Operations Center. Our department also participated in a full range of planning and

training activities associated with response to the Ebola Virus Disease. As a result of these events, significant lessons were learned and changes implemented.

In addition to our normal annual review and update of emergency plans and procedures, the St Charles Parish All Hazards Emergency Plan was formally revised in 2014. This revision incorporated many of the Federal and State level emergency preparedness updates implemented in recent years. It also incorporated new information on Parish government response actions and recognition of new Parish emergency response facilities. St Charles is the first Parish in the State to complete an All Hazards Plan revision in the current plan revision cycle. We also formally revised our Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2014. This plan helps take a broad view of mitigation opportunities throughout the Parish and maintains our standing in the Federal grants program. Our department also worked with the US Coast Guard and local stakeholders to update the St Charles parish portion of the Oil Spill Response Plan.

Our department has begun the formal accreditation process by the Emergency Management Accreditation Program (EMAP). This program is sponsored by FEMA, the National Emergency Management Association and the International Emergency Management Association, and represents the highest standard that local or State emergency management programs can achieve. We anticipate a formal review of our program under EMAP sometime in 2015.

Several local committee activities formally re-established in 2013 were successfully continued in 2014. This includes the LEPC and PRAT Team. The Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) for St Charles Parish is required under Federal guidelines for local jurisdictions in which manufacture, store or transport significant quantities of toxic and hazardous materials. This committee serves under the Louisiana Emergency Response Commission and oversees the ability of our department and Parish first response organizations to respond to hazardous materials incidents. The committee itself is made up of a broad range of community members with diverse backgrounds and interests.

The Parish Rapid Assessment Team (PRAT) is composed of Parish government employees and has as its main focus response to hazardous materials incidents. St Charles Parish is obliged to provide assistance through mutual aid agreements to other parishes in our region should the need arise. The PRAT team now serves as a significant first line response resource for the protection of public health and safety.

There are several technological initiatives that we would like to mention. Our department was successful in receiving a grant for a mobile communications vehicle in 2014. This vehicle will enable the re-establishment of EOC communications in the event that communications at the primary EOC are lost. In addition, St Charles Parish

received certification under the Integrated Public Alert & Warning System (IPAWS) program established by FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security. IPAWS designation allows St Charles Parish access to a complete range of emergency and mobile communications system for public notification in an emergency. Additionally, St Charles Parish is working with Waterford-3 to update and modernize the outdoor siren warning system. This project is expected to be completed in 2015.

In addition to maintain proficiency through regular annual training activities, the Department staff also participated in high level training activities in 2014. This included course work on radiological preparedness sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security at the Naval Post-Graduate School and attendance at the hurricane decision-makers course at the National Hurricane Center.

There was significant progress in our preparedness for the protection of public health and safety throughout 2014. We look forward to continuing these efforts in 2015 as we seek to achieve the very highest standards of any local jurisdiction in the country.

We will welcome any questions that you may have in regard to our performance in the past year and our plans for future initiatives.